

Psalms: The Songs of the People of God
Psalms 99: Exalting Our Holy God and King
Sunday, August 18, 2019

Introduction

There is a reason why many of us struggle with worry and fear. There is a reason why we often fall in our battle against sin. There is a reason we frequently lack peace and fail to find comfort. Often, our struggles are directly connected to our view of God.

The truth is most of us are not at risk of having a view of God that is too big; conversely many of us, maybe most of us, are at risk of having a view of God that is too small. And when our view of God is too small it's very easy for us to underestimate His power or to misunderstand the nature of our relationship to Him.

Thankfully we have passages of Scripture like Psalm 99. In this psalm we are encouraged to see God rightly, to stand in awe of His holiness and majesty. We are told of His position as the Holy King and the Holy Judge. We start with a view of the King on His throne and then the psalm takes a stunning turn and ends with this glorious truth: The Holy King has entered into fellowship with people.

The Structure of the Psalm

The psalm naturally divides into three sections, each ending with exaltation of the King and an affirmation of His holiness. This repeated refrain emphasizes the main idea of the psalm: God is holy and is to be exalted.

The Holy King – Set Apart in His Position – He is Exalted (99:1-3)

- **The Lord as the Reigning King** – In vv. 1-2 we see the Lord as the reigning King: He is seated on His throne and His rule is universal.
- **Unpacking the Imagery** – The scene the psalmist is describing cannot be overstated. The King is on His throne with His feet on His footstool, the Ark of the Covenant (1 Chronicles 28:2). Other passages fill in the details of the throne room (Isaiah 6:1-7; Revelation 4:6-11).
- **Responding to the Holy King** – This view of the King on His throne is meant to show God's holiness (He is set apart) and lead His people to worship. He is the Holy King and He is worthy of all praise and exaltation (1 Chronicles 16:24-31).

The Holy Judge – Set Apart in His Justice – Let us Exalt Him (99:4-5)

- **The Lord as the Righteous Judge** – As the sovereign king God rules with power and authority, and at the same time He rules with justice. His rule is unrivaled and yet He is always righteous and fair (Is. 11:3-5).
- **The Implications of God's Just Rule** – An important implication of God's justice is that as a just judge He cannot overlook sin: sin must be punished. For those who are made right before God through Jesus we can celebrate the justice of God, but those who remain in sin should fear the justice of God (Romans 3:21-26).
- **Responding to the Holy Judge** – This view of God's justice is meant to show His holiness and lead His people to worship. He is the Holy Judge and He is worthy of all praise and exaltation.

Our Holy God – In Relationship with His People – Let us Exalt Him (99:6-9)

- **A Blessed Reality** – After standing in awe of God as the Holy King and Judge this third section should overwhelm us; here we see that the same God who reigns over all also enters into fellowship with His people – people born of sin. He is called “our God.”
- **Representative Examples** – The psalmist uses Moses, Aaron and Samuel as representative examples. These men were in fellowship with God and now we, through Christ, can enter into the same fellowship.
- **Interacting with a Holy God** – As we consider the way God interacted with Moses, Aaron and Samuel we are reminded of the ways we too are brought into fellowship with God.
 - The Holy God answers the prayers of His people (Hebrews 4:14-16)
 - The Holy God speaks to His people (Hebrews 1:1-3)
 - The Holy God gives instruction for His people (1 Pet. 1:14-16)
 - The Holy God forgives His people
 - The Holy God disciplines His people (Hebrews 12:10)
- **Responding to Our Holy God** – Again we see that the proper response to God is praise and exaltation, but this time the psalmist emphasizes our relationship to the Holy God; He is referred to as “our God.”

Summary – God is the holy and righteous King, worthy of all praise, and yet His holiness does not mean detachment or uninvolvedness. Through Christ we can enter into fellowship with the Holy God. This blessed reality should lead us to worship Him, not only with our lips, but with our lives.